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CIA Said To Keep Poisons

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An official of the Central Intelligence Agency prevented the destruction of various toxins in spite of a presidential order calling for the elimination of the U.S. stockpile of bacteriological weapons, according to informed sources.

The preservation of the so-called "odds and ends" of bacteriological warfare will be subjected to public hearings next week before the Senate intelligence committee, headed by Frank Church (D-Idaho).

President Nixon, in November, 1969, took what was then described as "a decisive step" toward outlawing chemical and bacteriological warfare, by ordering destruction of the U.S. stockpile of bacteriological weapons.

Despite that edict, sources said, some 5 per cent of the proscribed poisons were "withheld" from destruction on the grounds that they might be useful for scientific or experimental purposes.

A middle-level official of the CIA was responsible for that order, sources said.

The poisons that should have been destroyed were discovered in a warehouse at Ft. Detrick, Md., by the White House earlier this year, officials said.

White House officials recently submitted a report on the issue to the Senate committee with the expressed hope that the committee could, and would, confine the issue to a publicly printed report.

Instead, Church insisted on public hearings, perhaps, critics said, to bolster his claims that the CIA has been operating like "a rogue elephant" out of control.

Administration sources said they doubted Church could make much headway with his charges. They acknowledged that the bacteriological materials should have been destroyed but added that the substances wound up at Ft. Detrick without any clear understanding that they were deadly or even dangerous.